

Dear Sir/Madam:

Thank you for holding this hearing today for Proposed Bill Number 648.

My name is Elizabeth Gerhard, I live in Vernon and work for Chrysalis Center as a Community Case Manager for the Veterans Support Services Program that provides Supportive Housing for homeless veterans and their families in the towns of Hartford, East Hartford, Manchester, Vernon, and Rockville.

I am here today to testify in support of Bill Number 648 to provide funding for case management services at Victory Gardens, a supportive project for homeless Veterans and families at the U.S.A. Department of Veterans Affairs Newington Campus.

Victory Gardens will provide homeless Veterans a new start in new permanent housing apartments and townhouses with support services by Chrysalis Center, Inc. Chrysalis Center, Inc. has provided supportive case management to homeless individuals for 18 years with great success.

Your support of Bill Number 648 will ensure the vital support services dollars are in place for the Veterans at Victory Gardens.

I have worked for Chrysalis Center for almost eight years now, in various positions. Currently, I am a Community Case Manager at the Chrysalis Center in Hartford; I provide case management services for 22 Honorable Discharged Veterans on my caseload whose lives have been positively impacted by the services I have been able to provide for them as their case manager. I have also referred them to obtain other benefits and health services that have further assisted with successfully maintaining their own apartments, obtaining employment or job readiness skills, and have better management of their physical and emotional well-being. I have the opportunity every day to witness first-hand the impact of our services on the individuals I work with. I have a few older veterans who call me every morning to say hello and to crack a joke to make me laugh. They are the same veterans who once were homeless and did not have anyone to call or to keep them motivated to do the best they can and live their lives with dignity and purpose.

Permanent Housing and Case Management support services transforms lives. Our interventions allow the opportunity for individuals to enhance independence and self-sufficiency by providing a roof over their head, food on the table and the ability to ultimately obtain employment and give back to the community! In fact, many of my veterans are here today doing just that. They are participating in democracy and their right to testify in support of something they have a personal experience with, and wish to support the effort to provide the same services for their fellow military comrades. Thank you and please support Bill Number 648.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth Gerhard
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